



Faculty of Social Sciences

**The Perspective of Political Party and 'New Politics': A Case Study on
Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) Party**

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Master of Social Sciences

2016

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

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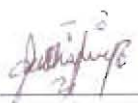
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The Perspective of Political Party and 'New Politics': A Case Study on
Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) Party

Sattheeswaran s/o Sivalingam

A dissertation submitted
in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Social Sciences

Faculty of Social Sciences
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

2016

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank GOD for His Guidance and kept me in His Grace and far from astray, I am finally able to complete this dissertation.

It is difficult to overstate my gratitude to my supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Neilson Ilan Mersat. With his enthusiasm, inspiration, and his great efforts to explain things clearly and simply, he helped to make my research work meaningful for me. Throughout my dissertation-writing period, he provided encouragement, sound advice, good teaching, good company, and lots of good ideas. I would have been lost without him. Special thanks to my co-supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Ahi Sarok for his guidance and encouragement.

Special appreciation goes to the Faculty of Social Sciences staffs and Centre for Graduate Studies staffs for their endless assistance throughout my years in UNIMAS. I would like to acknowledge the special thanks to Zamalah UNIMAS for the financial assistance.

Most importantly, I wish to thank my parents, Mr. Sivalingam and Mrs. Banumathi Devi for their patience. They raised me, supported me, taught me, and loved me. Also thank to my beloved siblings Mr. Rajenthiran and Ms. Nalini for their support.

Last but not least, my precious friends. Thank you for your endless love, joy and care that you have brought into my life. My love will always be with you guys. Thanks to Mr. Aathi Muni, Mr. Val Muni and Ms. Uma Devi.

ABSTRACT

This research intends to study about the perspective of MIC (Malaysian Indian Congress) members towards the party and 'new politics'. The perspectives were examined through the services that provided by MIC. Therefore, this research aimed to inspect why MIC was defeated in the 12th General Election via members perspective towards the services that provided by party, what is MIC doing to win the 13th General Election in term of services and rebranding as well as examine the 'new politics' among Indian community as a temporary swing or permanent. This research is participated by 426 respondents from P062 Sungai Siput (U), P094 Hulu Selangor and P109 Kapar area. Through '*purposive sampling*' data are collected with the distribution of questionnaires. Data analyses are done through SPSS programme and the research result is presented in term of a statistical descriptive pattern which is frequency distribution, percentage and mean score. The finding of this research indicates that the respondents are not much satisfied with the services that provided by MIC in before and after 12th General Election. It also directs that the lack of continuity in the rebranding and inefficiency of CWC (Central Working Committee) reduces the support of Indian community towards MIC. Therefore, the 'new politics' among Indian community is not a temporary swing and it is essential for MIC to gain back their support to make the party relevant.

***Perspektif Terhadap Parti Politik dan 'Politik Baru': Satu Kajian Kes di Parti Kongres
India Malaysia (MIC)***

ABSTRAK

Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji perspektif ahli-ahli MIC (Malaysian Indian Congress) terhadap parti dan 'politik baru'. Perspektif ahli-ahli MIC dikaji melalui perkhidmatan yang disediakan oleh parti ini. Oleh yang demikian, persoalan kajian ini adalah bermotif dalam menyelidik mengapa MIC dikalahkan pada Pilihan Raya Umum ke-12 melalui perspektif ahli-ahli ke arah perkhidmatan yang disediakan oleh parti, apakah MIC lakukan untuk memenangi Pilihan Raya Umum ke-13 dari segi perkhidmatan dan penjenamaan semula parti, serta memeriksa keewujudan 'baru politik' di kalangan masyarakat India sebagai ayunan sementara atau kekal. Kajian ini disertai oleh 426 orang responden daripada kawasan P062 Sungai Siput (U), P094 Hulu Selangor dan P109 Kapar. Data dikumpul melalui 'persampelan bertujuan' dengan pengedaran borang soal selidik. Penganalisan data dilakukan melalui program SPSS dan hasil kajian dibentangkan dari segi aspek deskriptif statistik yang merangkumi taburan kekerapan, peratusan dan min. Dapatan kajian ini jelas menunjukkan bahawa responden tidak sebegitu berpuas hati dengan perkhidmatan yang disediakan oleh MIC di sebelum dan selepas Pilihan Raya Umum ke-12. Selain itu, hasil kajian juga menunjukkan terdapatnya kekurangan dalam penjenamaan parti dan ketidakcekapan CWC (Jawatankuasa Kerja Pusat) telah mengurangkan sokongan masyarakat India terhadap MIC. Oleh itu, 'politik baru' di kalangan masyarakat India bukanlah ayunan sementara dan ini adalah penting untuk MIC dalam mendapatkan semula sokongan masyarakat India supaya kerelevanan parti dapat dijamin.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMIPF	All Malaysian Indian Progressive Party
BN	Barisan Nasional
CWC	Central Working Committee
DAP	Democratic Action Party (DAP)
GE	General Election
GERAKAN	Parti Gerakan Malaysia
HINDRAF	Hindu Rights Action Force
HRP	Human Right's Party
KEADILAN	People Justice Party
KIMMA	Malaysian Indian Muslim Congress
MIC	Malaysian Indian Congress
PPP	People Progressive Party
PSM	Party Socialist Malaysia
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UKM	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Chapter One will brief out the research background, problem statement, research questions, objectives and methodology of this thesis. Besides that, the contributions of knowledge and thesis outline also are terse in.

1.2 Research Background

Democracy is one of the ideologies that are used to form a government. Majority of the countries apply the doctrine of democracy because it was being a system of government that operates under the ‘rule of people’. The people themselves will decide who their leader is and conduct the government through voting. Besides that, the principles which practices in democracy such as equal rights, justice, freedom of speech, gathering, media, religion and others make the people feel more the juice of a well-being civil society compare to other form of government.

Even in some situations when the government gains their power they are still unable to betray their citizen and indirectly uphold the principle of democracy due to the universal suffrage which requires a healthy verification in the safeguard of civil and political rights (Beetham, 2003). The freedom of participation by the people or society and their influence on the decision making process of government has made the democracy become a highlighted belief throughout the contemporary world.

Constantly, there are many types of democracy which carry the same meaning in the end, but the developments in democracy become a significant issue. Some countries which operate their nation through the democratic way tend to be criticized by other nations when there are no developments. It is essential to allow the free participation of people, political parties or NGOs (Non-Government Organizations) during the election period. However, some nations try to distract their freedom and rights, although practicing the principles of democracy. At the end of the day, a lot of rebellion or dissatisfaction by people towards the government will take place and it will tarnish the nation's image internationally. Perhaps, they will do demonstration to show their dissatisfaction and also when their future becomes uncertain. Interest groups or social movements are influential mechanism of action (Alexis de Tocqueville as cited in Axford et al., 2002) which act to achieve particular needs and articulated the interest of people by not participating in the election, but became the most significant instrument in the decision making process of government for the good will of society. In fact, throughout the movement the discrimination, inequality and even the domination by a certain group of social classes or ethnicity towards others can be reduced too.

Therefore, it is very important for the government to uphold and secure the principles of democracy, especially to the nations which are classified as a multi ethnic society. Even though in a democracy the decision making process relied based on majority, but it is important also to address the voice of minority groups which ensure the stability of ruling government. According to Sen (1999), a country should not be "*fit for democracy*" rather than it should be "*fit through democracy*". Once a nation or the ruling government is able to do this, it will indirectly undertake the interest of people who are disparate via ethnic or even wealth too. In the case of India, the nation faced a lot of problems once obtain their independence from the

British. However, India able to overcome most of the predicament issues, although the society be composed of variety languages and religions. The political competitiveness actively makes the government rise and fall through the rules of electoral and parliamentary (Sen, 1999). People tend to support the government that solves their needs and it shows a healthy democracy compare to the government which was ruled by one party for a long time.

Moreover, the growth in democracy also ensures the expansion of economic whereby economic policies that are enforced by the government come from the open discussions from different levels represented leaders which creates good policies that ensure the peoples' welfare. Overall, democracy became a universal value because of its benefits to the people in politics, economics and social too as argued by Sen (1999). However, the development in democracy cannot be happen just like that without its tools or instruments such as political parties, media, interest groups, pressure groups and more. All the way through these tools people able to express their desires or dissatisfaction to the government, freely united and gets some of the information about the current government activities (Beetham, 2003).

As a pillar of democracy, the political party is an organization that consists of a group of political activists which are demanded for the same interest. Instead, they are having a same set of ideas and political aims to achieve in a period time. These political parties are also being as important tools in a such government in order to fight and protect the interest of certain society or a group of people. Therefore the existence of political parties is known as “omni-present” due to the importance of it in any government (Palombara & Weiner, 1966).

Practically, each political party has a lot of roles which bring goodwill to their members or the society. However, the role of political parties in giving services cannot be denied. Most of the political party will ensure that the members in their party or the society are getting good services from time to time. By doing it, the political party is able to fulfill the demands or in fact the aggregation of interests that are needed by the society and indirectly creates a strong believe on the party. Indeed, it also ensures the votes of the party too.

Besides that, the freedom of political parties can be known from the types of government. Whereby, in authoritarian countries not all the political parties have the freedom to participate freely and fight their interest against the ruling party. On the other hand, such countries that practicing democracy allows the forming of new party as well as free competition through fair election. Their ideas by introducing of new and good policy during the election period, create the twist of votes between the competing parties.

Therefore, Malaysia is one of the democratic countries that operate under constitutional monarchy has also allowed the freedom of parties' participation. Since independence the Barisan Nasional (BN), the coalition of 14 political parties has become the ruling government in this country. Moreover, Malaysian political parties are based on ethnicity whereby the formation of parties are aimed to benefit some particular groups (Milne & Mauzy, 1982). Even there are some parties that established through certain ideology, but the support of party can be seen largely from one specific ethnic (Mokhtar in Moten, 2008). Nevertheless, UMNO (United Malays National Organisation) stands as a biggest party in this alliance (BN) and represent for the majority population of Malays but in order to stay in power the victory of other coalition parties also have to be taken into account.

Consequently, Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) is known as one of the political parties in BN that represent for Indian community. This party was formed by John A. Thivy on 1 Ogos 1946. MIC was merged with UMNO and MCA (Malaysian Chinese Association) and makes the alliance to win the majority seats in the election (Sakdan, 1997). To remain their power as government the trusts of people on government have to be maintained. If one of the parties could not able to fulfill their members' interests then it can affect the BN as a ruling party. Therefore, this research focuses on one of the coalition members in BN, that is the MIC party whereby to study the responses of their members towards the services that provided by them. So the questions arise up does MIC satisfied their members by providing good services? Is it MIC aggregating the interest of Indian community and solve their problems?

In fact, these questions pointed because of the 2008 general election results and 'new politics'. People believe that the Malaysian political systems are moving towards 'new politics' era (Loh & Saravanamuthu, 2003). A part of society are no more following the traditional or 'old politics' ways whereas support the same ethnic party. People tend to support and vote other ideology or ethnic based party which brings benefit to them (Loh, 2005). Indirectly, it shows that people are no more fearing for BN's brutal which aggravated them to votes the ruling party according to ethnics like those times and it might make the well growth of democracy in Malaysia (Hoong, 1991). Due to it parties are trying to defend themselves by introducing and improving their several services so that can avoid the mobilization of votes to other parties. This situation shows that Malaysian are no more fearing for BN's brutal (Hoong, 1991). Previously, people tend to vote based on the candidate's ethnic or the ruling party (BN) because of the brutal statements by BN. For instance, those whom vote against BN will have some difficulties in applying loan or assistance to develop their business in future. Somehow, the 2008 general

election shows that the Malaysian are no more votes based on ethnic and ready to choose the candidate from other ethnic. These actions might develop the growth of democracy in Malaysia.

1.3 Problem Statement

‘New politics’ have been believed to take place in the Malaysian political system. The general election results in 1999 and 2008 confirms that the level of voting was no more strongly based on one ethnic (Nadarajah, 2008; Nicoll & Delaney, 2008). Especially, in the 2008 general election the Indian voters have a tendency to vote for other race candidates and different ethnic parties which make MIC represented could not able to defend their constituencies (Malaysia General Election 2008, 2009 & Malaysian Indian Congress, 2009). Hence, the opposition parties were able to increase their number of states as well as be understood that the link between people and the government was being abraded.

However, there are also some Indian voters who still support MIC. Therefore, as a communal party MIC should make the party relevant among all the Indian community but some part of the people do not give their support as previously. Why these situations happen and to get back the support of voters the party should look back their service giving process. Due to it, this research focus to evaluate the perspective of MIC members towards the services that given by the party. Rationally, these services are consisted of welfare, educational, economic, political, social and cultural services. As a political party, MIC should aggregate the interest of their members and try to solve the problems that faced by them through a valuable service. By doing these, the party can ensure the supports from their members and it will guide the party to achieve the development of the community effectively.

As a result, to overcome the scenario of ‘new politics’ and to be the leading party among Indian community the MIC was on going in re-branding the party. Moreover, the “One Malaysia” concept that was introduced by Prime Minister also points up that the government under his administration must give important priority to the peoples’ interest (Datuk Seri Najib Razak, 2009). Whereas, it can be achieved through the services that indirectly rate the performance of government. So, to attain it MIC must well implement these concepts and enhance their services which will help to rebuild the confidence of people on the party.

Beside study the perspective of MIC members towards services which determine the party performance, the role of Central Working Committee (CWC) also included. As a centre part, CWC must play their responsibilities accurately in giving services and increase strong relationship between all the MIC branches. If the CWC could not able to attain the MIC objectives or the success of government policies then it might affect the contribution and development in Indian community. In reality, it also will lead to the failure of BN in upcoming general elections.

1.4 Research Questions

Formulating a factual research questions are very important because it will emphasis the development of research and indicate whether the investigation fits into the goal of study (Lipowski, 2008). Consequently, the research questions that are commenced in this dissertation are as stated below:

- 1) Does MIC members vote against the party due to the party’s lack of services to the people?